

RABBINIC THOUGHTS
ON RACE

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Rabbi Dr. S. Rappaport

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Deus est mortali iuvare mortalem — Man's true God is the helping of man. — (Greek Stoic.)

The true Shechina is in man. Where else is God's presence manifested not to our eyes only, but to our hearts, as in our fellow-man?. — (St. Chrysostom.)

God said to Moses: In every place where you find a trace of the feet of man, there am I before you. — (Mechilta ad Exodus 17.6.)

STUDENTS of Rabbinics are aware of the fact that the classic works of Rabbinic Literature — Tosifta, Mishna, Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud, the Halachic and Haggadic Midrashim — do not contain well defined systems of thought and doctrine. In the vast sea of Rabbinic writings, which extend over a period of almost a thousand years, conflicting statements emanating from hundreds of teachers are to be found side by side; in every case the local and temporary conditions, as well as the individual mentality of the author, have to be considered in evaluating the authoritative character of a

Rabbinic pronouncement. There is, consequently, neither a systematic teaching, nor an official view on Race and Colour in Rabbinic literature, only various dicta pertaining to the subject. It is therefore not a simple task to disentangle from the vast, varied and incoherent material the dominant trend, the leading tendency of Rabbinic Judaism with regard to Race and Race Relations. Yet an attempt to describe objectively the characteristic Weltanschauung, the normative doctrine of Rabbinic Judaism on the subject of racial attitudes, including the attitude to Colour, will be made in this study. *

I.

An unbiased examination of the Hebrew Bible, the foundation of Rabbinic Judaism, as well as of Rabbinic sources, reveal the fact that neither biblical nor post-biblical Judaism shows marked prejudice against any human being on account of racial descent or ethnic heritage. Without manifest racial bias the Bible relates that Machlon and Kilyon, men of Israel, married women of Moab; that Ruth, the Moabitess, wife of the Israelite Boas, founded the Davidic dynasty, and thus became the ancestress of the Messiah, a scion of the House of David. Asenat, an Egyptian woman, a descendant of Ham, was the wife of Joseph and became the mother of Ephraim and Menasse, two important tribes of Israel. Moses' first wife was Zippora, a Midianite woman; later on Moses took an Ethiopian wife, and God approved of the union. Naama, the Amonitess, one of King Solomon's wives, gave birth to Rehabeam, who continued the Davidic line in Judah. Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, was the wife of a member of the tribe of Judah, whom tradition identifies with Caleb, the son of Yefuneh, one of the twelve spies. 1)

* Annotated text of a lecture delivered under the auspices of the South African Jewish Historical and Sociological Society on August 24, 1948.

The Bible shows hostility to certain nations, especially the seven Canaanite peoples, who inhabited the land of Israel prior to its occupation by the Israelites, as well as to the frontier nations Ammon, Moab, Edom, Egypt, and the treacherous and cruel Amalekites. But the sources make it abundantly clear that this antipathy was never based on racial contempt, but on religious difference, historic-political antagonism, or on humanitarian and ethical grounds. These nations were excluded from entering into family community with Israel because, like the Seven Nations of Canaan, they would "turn away the sons of Israel from following God and would make them serve other Gods" (Deut. 7, 4), or because, like the Ammonites and Moabites, they "met you not with bread and water on the way when you came forth from Egypt and hired against thee Balaam to curse thee" (Deut. 23, 5). The enmity to Amalek was justified by the memory of what he did "when you came forth from Egypt . . . how he smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou was faint and weary; and he feared not God" (Deut. 25, 17-18). But the Rabbis first interpreted the prohibition against the admission of certain nations into the community of the Lord, i.e., intermarriage with them, as referring only to men, not to women, and later abolished the biblical interdiction altogether. 2)

There is, no doubt, also a marked trend to be found in Biblical literature reflecting a popular aversion to exogamy. Abraham makes Eliezer swear not to take a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of Canaan (Genesis 27, 3). Isaac requests his son Jacob to take a wife from his own family (Genesis 28, 1). But the basic motivation of this attitude is consistently religious, never racial. The prohibition against intermarriage with the Seven Nations of Canaan is prompted by religious-cultural scruples, not by racial arrogance. Fear of idolatry and attendant immorality, not the preservation

of racial purity, is the fundamental cause for the prohibition of intermarriage: "And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go astray after their Gods and make thy sons go astray after their Gods" (Exodus 34, 16), as explained by an ancient commentator: "Whosoever enters with these nations into family relations, associates likewise with their idolatry." 3)

Hamor, the Hivite, is unworthy of Dina, Jacob's daughter, because he is uncircumcised (ib. 34, 14). Samson's parents reproach their son for having taken a wife from the nation of the uncircumcised Philistines; but the writer of Judges remarks: "But his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord (Judges 14, 3-4). The Hitite woman whom Esau had married were a "bitterness of spirit" to Isaac and Rivka (Genesis 26, 35), but the union was permitted and legal. The biblical law which sanctions marriage with any "comely woman" taken as a captive of war (Deut. 21) betrays a complete lack of racial prejudice.

Even the harsh injunctions of Esra and Nehemiah, demanding the separation of foreign women from their Judean husbands, had an ethical, not a racial motivation: Their object was to preserve Judaism not from racial, but from spiritual pollution, to protect the new-found Jewish community from the encroachment of alien immorality, "from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land, their abominations, wherewith they had filled the land from one end to another in their filthiness" (Esra 9, 11). The reason for Esra's stern insistence on endogamy was the emergency situation of the Return from Exile and especially the fact that full religious proselytism, i.e., complete religious naturalization of a foreigner into the community, had not yet been adopted in Israel as a means to bridging religious differences. 4) In any case, the decrees of Esra were only an episode in Jewish history, never a norm in Jewish life. 5) The normal rabbinic requirement in case of intermarriage was conversion of

the non-Jewish partner, not separation. The Rabbis permitted marriage with male and female members of every race and nation, on condition that the Gentile marriage partner fully and sincerely embraced the faith of Israel. 6)

The creation story of Genesis envisages the entire human race as descended from one human couple. All races and peoples that inhabit the earth constitute different branches of one great human family, springing from one and the same ancestry. The monoanthropic teaching of the Bible expressed the concept of the unity of men and constituted an emphatic protest against any division of mankind in superior and inferior races, against the claim to hereditary racial superiority of some peoples over others. All men were descended from the same ancestors, were of one blood and parentage, and stood in an identical relation to God. "This sublime conception of the unity of the human race logically follows from the belief in the unity of God and like it forms one of the cornerstones of the edifice of Judaism." 7)

It has to be stressed that the ethical-universalist interpretation of the mono-anthropic tradition of Genesis is not a result of modern humanistic thought, but is strongly emphasised by the Rabbis who explain that one single man was created in the world in order to teach "that whosoever destroys one human being, it is counted to him, as if he had destroyed the whole world; and whosoever preserves one human soul, it is counted on to him, as if he had preserved the whole world; all men derive their origin from one human couple so that no one could say to his neighbour: my father was greater than yours; one human was created because of the righteous and because of the wicked: so that the righteous may not say, we are descended from righteous men, and the wicked, we are descended from wicked men. There is yet another explanation: because of the families: so that they might not

quarrel one with the other on account of nobler family descent; even so, knowing that man was created alone, families still dispute with one another concerning their claim to superiority of descent; how much more would they quarrel, had God in the beginning created two human beings." 8)

The Rabbis emphasise the unique value of every human personality by explaining that one single man was created in the beginning "in order to proclaim the greatness of God; if a human being stamps many coins with one die, these coins look all alike; but God has stamped every man with the die of the first man, and yet not one of them looks exactly like his fellow. Therefore every man must say: For my sake was the world created." The thesis of the unity of the human race and the equal worthiness of every individual finds emphatic expression in the rabbinic tradition that God has made Adam of the dust gathered from the whole earth and mingled it with the waters of the seas, so that the whole earth should be considered his home. 9)

It is a fundamental teaching of Rabbinism that men are descended from one ancestor and consequently no people or family can claim hereditary ethnic superiority over any other. There are no inherently righteous or wicked families, nations or races, only wicked and righteous individuals. The difference in physiological characteristics between various groups of men have no moral or intellectual significance, but are a reflection of geographical or cultural circumstances. This is the way in which the great teacher Hillel (first century B.C.E.), explained certain physical traits peculiar to Palmyrens, Africans and Babylonians. 10) "The mosaic Genesis," wrote Ferdinand Gregorovius, the famous German historian, "launched the highest metaphysical conception of man, namely, that he is the image of God and the son of God. All human beings therefore, according to the

Jewish creation myth, partake of this likeness, and therefrom results the acknowledgment of human dignity in general as well as the equality and brotherhood of all the descendants of Adam." 11)

Faith, not race, has been the governing principle of the Rabbinic group attitude; identity of religion overrides all other differences. "I do not know the origin of the term Jew," says the Roman historian, Dio Cassius (Second Century C.E.), "the name is used, however, to designate all who observe the customs of the people, even though they be of different race." 12) The Israelites considered themselves as an ethical aristocracy, distinguished by their superior faith and loftier morals, but not as originally different from their neighbours. Israel was recipient of a special Divine Revelation, and therefore under obligation to observe the Revealed Law, the Torah, the most perfect instrument of individual and collective salvation; yet the election of Israel is not based on ethical descent. Israel is not organically superior to non-Israel, only historically more advanced. Though the children of Israel were the first to be vouchsafed the revelation of the One True God, yet all people are eligible into the community of the faithful, if they are willing to accept the full authority or at least the moral law of the Torah. The Torah is no racial monopoly of Israel. The Jews possessed no inborn superiority over other peoples, and the distinction conferred on them by the revelation on Sinai would immediately come to an end if they abandoned the Torah entrusted to their guardianship. "Only if you will hearken to My Commandments will you be unto Me a peculiar treasure" (Exodus 19, 5). The Torah was neither the exclusive possession of Israel, nor the prerogative of a single racial group; it was destined for all mankind, and happy the day when all nations will accept its teachings. "For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language," exclaims the prophet Zephaniah (3, 9), "that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve

him with one consent." The immoral Heathens are considered wicked and damned as long as they deny the Oneness of God and refuse to submit to his ethical demands; yet their wickedness is neither basic nor irremediable; for there is no unalterable inferiority inherent in any group of men.

According to Jewish doctrine, race by itself does not constitute a final criterion, it neither qualifies nor disqualifies for achievement and salvation. Everyone who wishes to enter into the congregation of Israel and become "righteous" may be accepted, if his sincerity is proved, for all men are eligible to become "Israelites by adoption." Out of the numerous Rabbinical sayings reflecting this attitude the following are highly characteristic: "I summon the Heavens and the Earth as witness that whether a Gentile or a Jew, a man or a woman, a slave or a slave woman, according to their deeds shall the Holy spirit rest upon them." 13) Antoninus, the Roman Emperor (Second Century, C.E.) asked the Patriarch Judah whether he had a share in the Future World? The Patriarch replied in the affirmative. But does not Obadja prophesy (5, 18) that nobody will remain from the sinful house of Esau? 14) asked the Heathen. This prophecy only applies to those who commit sinful deeds, was the reply. 15) The individual is not valued according to race, sex or social status; in every human being lies the ability to rise above the accident of birth and to achieve moral and spiritual excellence.

Rabbinic sources reflect a division of mankind into three groups, distinguished by the degree of spiritual perfection they have attained:

The first group is Israel, "God's witness to the peoples" (Isaiah 55, 7), "Suffering Servant" (ib. 53), "Light to the Nations" (ib. 49, 6), "Kingdom of Priests (Exodus 19, 6), the recipient of the divinely revealed Law, which he is in duty bound to share with all men. In the spirit of the

sublime universalist vision of the Second Isaiah, the Rabbis enjoin that the Torah was not Israel's exclusive possession, but destined for all nations. "God gave the Torah to Israel, "teaches the Midrash, "in order that they might confer the Divine favour thereof upon all the Nations of the World." 16) The concept "Israel" is not racially determined, for Israel includes not only born Israelites, but also "naturalized" Israelites, i.e., proselytes to the Israelite faith. 17) God's call to Abraham to leave his father's home culminates in the exhortation: And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12, 3).

The second group comprises all men, who observe the Basic Moral Code, known as the "Seven Commandments" enjoined on the descendants of Noah, the ancestor of all men who survived the flood. The seven Noachian precepts 18) prohibit incest, murder, blasphemy, robbery, idolatry, injustice, eating flesh cut from a live animal. "These commandments may be regarded as the foundations of all human and moral progress; Judaism . . . recognises that moral progress and its concomitant Divine love and approval are the privilege and obligation of all mankind. And hence the Talmud lays down the Seven Noachian precepts, by the observance of which all mankind may attain spiritual perfection and without which moral death must inevitably ensue." 19) These fundamental ordinances of universal justice and morality constitute the Natural Law of Humanity and are binding on all men, for "He that created Israel also created the Nations." 20) Every righteous Gentile who observes these fundamental moral statutes will partake of salvation and share in the bliss of Life Eternal. God says to Moses: "Is there before me any regard of persons? Whether it be Israelite or Heathen, man or woman, man servant or maid servant, if he has fulfilled a Commandment he will receive his reward." 21)

The Rabbis make a point of singling out a heathen as an ideal model for observing the fifth Commandment. A Rabbi was once asked to define the extent to which one is obliged to carry out the Commandment to honour father and mother. "Go and see what a heathen, Dama of Askalon, did for his father," he replied. ²²⁾ The Israelites are upbraided for having imitated the unrighteous among the heathens and not observed the good ways of the pious among them. The Persians and Medians are held up by the Rabbis as examples of many virtues, among them the cardinal virtue of chastity in marital life. The wisdom of the heathens is frequently praised: If a man has spoken a wise thought, he is worthy to be called Rabbi, even if he be a heathen. ²³⁾ Wisdom is rightly considered as a universal quality, independent of race or faith. The wisdom of the heathen is referred to in the Bible (Jeremiah 49, 7; 1 Kings 5, 10) and acknowledged by the Rabbis. In a controversy between Jewish and non-Jewish Sages concerning the movements of the stars, Rabbi Jehuda the Patriach adopts the view of the Gentiles, as their words seem to express the truth (Pesachim 97a), Rabbi Jehuda adopts the view of Emperor Antoninus on the question as to when, in the physical development of Man, the life principle joins the body (Genesis 4, 34). It is characteristic for the lack of racial prejudice in Rabbinic thought that Job, the man who was "wholehearted, upright, that feared God and shunned evil," the chief protagonist in the drama between God and Satan, was, according to some sources, a Gentile, who, like Abraham, served God out of love, not out of fear. ²⁴⁾ Maimonides, the illustrious medieval codifier of Jewish Law, states unambiguously that all those who observe the Seven Noachidic Laws are regarded as Chassiday Umot Ha-Olam (Righteous Gentiles), who, according to the teaching of R. Joshua (Synhedrin 105a), have a share in the World to come (Hilchos Melachim 8, 11). In this humane spirit the

author of the Book of the Pious, who lived in the thirteenth century in Germany in an atmosphere of hatred and oppression, teaches that all Gentiles who observe the Seven Noachian Commandments have their share in Paradise (§ 532). Of characteristic significance is the view of Isaac Arama, a Spanish Rabbi of the fifteenth century. He explains that the words of the Mishna Sanhedrin IX I: "All Israelites have a share in the World to come" do not refer merely to people who happen to be born into Israel. Israel signifies the quality of righteousness and every righteous man is of Israel. 25)

Achad Haam, the Zionist philosopher of Judaism, rightly declared: "It is indeed a unique feature of Judaism, that it distinguishes its own adherence from the rest of mankind only by imposing on them a heavy load of duties and obligations, whereas it lets the non-Jews off lightly, allowing them to earn life eternal by merely fulfilling the most fundamental moral duties, embodied in the Seven Noachitic Laws." (Shinuy Arachin, English by L. Simon ed. Philosophia Judaica p. 8.)

The third group consists of the sinful heathens, who live a life of unbridled immorality and are condemned to eternal punishment if they persist in their evil ways. Yet the gates of Repentance are always open to them, for mankind is one in sin and atonement. Regular sacrifices are brought in the Temple for the salvation of their souls and charity is offered to atone for their misdeeds. 26) Even the Seven Nations of Kanaan, the very incarnation of idolatry and immorality, from whom the Israelites were commanded to wrest the Promised Land by force, could, according to the Rabbis, escape the supreme penalty demanded by biblical law, if they repented of their abominable deeds and accepted the Noachite Commandments. 27) Maimonides makes the remarkable statement that even intermarriage with the prescribed heathen nation of Kanaan was biblically permitted if they accepted

the Jewish faith (Issuray Biah 12, 22). It was their idolatry that prompted the stern biblical regulations against them, not their race.

According to a Rabbinic tradition, Pharoah, King of Egypt, the very personification of wickedness and rebellion against God, repented of his misdeeds and was saved from drowning; he became King of Niniveh and led his new people in the path of righteousness. 28) Even the Ten Plagues, the punishment for rebellion against God, which God brought upon the Egyptians, had no other object than to purify them from evil, as it is written: "Wounds cleanse away evil" (Prov. 20, 30). 29)

Often quoted is the following Rabbi dictum (Megilla 10a): "The ministering angels wanted to chant hymns at the destruction of the Egyptians. But God said: 'My children lie drowned in the sea, and you would sing?' This passage has nobly influenced Jewish liturgy, for it supplies one of the reasons why on Passover an abbreviated Hallel (Psalms of Praise) is read during the Half Holidays: The feeling of rejoicing should be tempered by the thought of the dead enemy. God's mercy even extends over the wicked Egyptian heathen. 30)

These three sectors of mankind — Israelites, Noachites, sinful heathen — are not basically apart, the division between them is not natural and immutable, like the barrier between Hellenes and Barbarians in classical Greek doctrine. 30a) The groups are wide open and there is no fixed law to bar any individual from passing from one group to another. Group membership is not determined by birth alone; no racial attribute prevents the individual from attaining the highest perfection. The barrier between Jews, Noahites and Heathens is not absolute, but conditional; not permanent, but temporary. "God does not disqualify a single creature; rather he accepts them all. The gates are open at all hours, whoever would enter, let him enter." 31) The Torah, the Rabbis teach,

was given in the wilderness and in fire and in water. As these three elements are free to all the inhabitants of the world, so are the words of the Torah free to all the inhabitants of the world. The Torah was given publicly and openly, in a place to which no one had any claim. For if it had been given in the Land of Israel, the nations of the world could have said: "We have no part in it. Therefore it was given in the wilderness publicly and openly, and in a place to which no one had any claim. Everyone who desires to accept it let him come and accept it." 32)

The Rabbis were no doubt particularists in stressing the unique relationship between God and the people, which first revealed His glory to men, and in preaching the sustaining message of God's enduring guardianship over Israel, even after the national catastrophe of 70 C.E. 33) Yet their particularism was not exclusive, for all "Gentiles" were eligible to become "Israelites," ethical descent not being a condition for spiritual excellence and ultimate salvation. The antagonism of the Jews was directed against the idolatrous immorality of paganism, not at the pagans as human beings. Already the Bible commands that the hostile Edomites should not be despised, and even the Egyptians, who had enslaved Israel, should not be abhorred, because Israel was a stranger in their land (Deut. 23, 8). To this the Midrash has the following significant comment: "A human being is loath to forget an injury inflicted upon him, but the Lord's ways are different; the Israelites were cruelly enslaved in Egypt, yet in spite of it the Lord pitied the Egyptians and commanded: "Do not abhor them, because thou wast a stranger in his land, but seek peace, as it is written (Psalm 3, 4); seek peace and pursue it" (Deut. R. 5).

The Jewish feeling of chosenness, of group superiority, was not based on racial excellence, but on the consciousness of the supremacy of Israel's God idea, the excellence of his laws, the loftiness of his moral code.

The Israelites were indeed imbued with spiritual pride, but not with racial arrogance, their nationalism was fundamentally spiritual, not racial. Israel's selection did not entail special Divine favours, but imposed upon them added moral responsibilities, for they were to be judged by more exacting standards than those applied to other people: "Only you have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities," is Amos's (3, 2) verdict on Jewish national vain glory. Isaiah emphasizes the equality of all nations before God, who will bless them, saying: "Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hand, and Israel, my inheritance" (19, 25). Even Egypt, Israel's cruel oppressor, is God's people! Israel's selection never constituted a theoretical basis for supremacy over "inferior races." "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided the children of man, he set the borders of the peoples . . ." (Deut. 32, 8). Kanaan was promised to Israel as a perpetual inheritance, just as all the surrounding countries were granted to other peoples as their national possession (Deut. 2, 5; 29). If ever there was a political imperialistic urge among the Jews, as in the days of the Hasmonean Kings during the Second Commonwealth, it certainly had no religious sanction behind it, nor was it based on special privileges of domination granted to a superior race. ³⁴⁾ Even the conquest of Kanaan, Israel's inheritance, had, at least in the eyes of subsequent generations, an ethical motivation (Lev. 18, 24-25). ³⁵⁾

The most drastic refutation of any assumption of an innate biological inheritance and racial excellence of the seed of Israel is contained in the startling Talmudic genealogies which represent great teachers of the Law as descendants of Proselytes, even of thoroughly depraved sinners. Rabbi Akiba is reported to be a descendant of Sisera, the Kanaanite enemy of Israel; Rabbi Meir is said to be an offspring of the wicked Roman Emperor,

Nero; 36) the great teachers Shemaya and Abtalyon, are descended from Sennacherib, the Assyrian conqueror. Even Haman, the arch-enemy of Israel, was the progenitor of great teachers of the Law, like Rabbi Samuel ben Shelat. 37) These curious family trees of illustrious teachers of the Law, ascribing to them not only descent from Heathens, but even from notorious Jew-haters, primarily reflect the desire to extol the power of Judaism which brings forth great teachers from its very enemies; 38) but they also emphatically ridicule the importance of racial background and emphasise the utter irrelevance of racial origin for spiritual achievement and lay stress on personal character and deed.

The following significant tradition concerning Shemaya and Abtalion, two renowned teachers of proselyte stock, expresses the thought that it is deeds, not racial descent, that counts. "It once happened," the Talmud relates, "that a multitude of people accompanied the High Priest. When, however, they saw Shemaya and Abtalyon, they left the High Priest and followed these two scholars. When Shemaya and Abtalyon came to take leave of the High Priest, he said to them: Let the sons of the Gentiles go in peace. They replied: Let the sons of the Gentiles go in peace, that do the works of Aron (works of peace). But not the sons of Aron, who do not follow the ways of Aron." 39)

An impressive denial of racialism is contained in the following exquisite Midrash 40): When the Gibeonites, who had joined Israel, appealed to Joshua for help against the Emorite Kings (Joshua 10), Joshua sent them an unfriendly reply, hinting at the non-Israelite origin of the Gibeonites. But God rebuked him with the words: Think of thine own origin, Joshua! Are you yourself not of 'foreign' stock? Is not thy tribe the tribe of Ephraim, descended from Joseph and his Egyptian wife, Asnath, the daughter of Potyphar?" No Israelite should ever boast of purity of race! God does not look to race, but to good-

ness and piety! He cares for purity of life rather than for purity of blood!

There is no special biological excellence in the seed of Abraham, nor has the Jewish group a racial monopoly on knowledge of the Lord and the right way of life. To be a true heir to Abraham's covenant depends on voluntary adherence, not on race. The significant attributes of Abraham's children are ethical, not ethnic. Pity and charity are the characteristic virtues of Abraham seed: "He who has no pity upon his fellow-creatures cannot be regarded as a rightful descendant of Abraham." 41) Descent from Abraham represents a spiritual, not merely a physical, fact: "Ye are the children of the Lord your God" (Deut. 14, 1): "If you behave as children and do not act like Heathens, then you are called children," teaches R. Jehuda ben Ilay; "but if you do not so behave, you are not called his children." 42) If Sisera, Nero and even Haman, the Amalekite, the arch-foe, could beget righteous children, who can maintain that goodness or wickedness is inborn or racially conditioned? If evildoers like Nebuzaradan and Nero embraced the Jewish faith, who could be regarded as unworthy to enter the community of the Lord? No human being is inherently barred from religious or moral achievement to which he may aspire. Man's spirit is not slave to matter. It is not bound to his body nor to his biological heritage. The value of a human being is not pre-determined by birth. His spirit rises above flesh and blood, for man is beyond biology.

The Rabbis frequently stress the fact that moral and spiritual qualities are highly individual and cannot be transmitted merely by hereditary factors. Every human being has its own personal worth, independent of race and family to which he belongs. "You find," the Rabbis teach, "that a righteous man begets a righteous son; a wicked man begets a wicked son; but it also happens that a wicked father begets a righteous son, while a righteous

father begets a wicked son. For example: The righteous Abraham was a descendant of the wicked Terah; the pious Ezekiah came of the sinner Achaz, the good King Josiah issued from the evildoer Amon; even Mordechai, the shining example of a loyal Jew, descended from the sinner Simei. On the other hand, Moses and Eli were righteous; yet their sons followed not in their ways. Abraham begot not only the righteous Isaac, but also the sinner Ismael; from the pious Isaac descended not only the virtuous Jacob, but also the evil Esau." 43) Why is it, the Rabbis ask, that sages do not have sons who are also sages? So that no one shall think the Torah can be inherited; so that scholars shall not consider themselves superior to the rest of the community. 44)

These Rabbinic teachings express the view that every human being is a free agent, unfettered by hereditary burdens, and by its own free choice can divest himself of any shackle imposed by physical descent and attain to the highest level of knowledge and moral excellence. Moral and spiritual qualities are highly individual and are not merely transmitted by heredity. There is no unique quality in any race, nation or family. Spirit, the Rabbis believe, is superior to matter: "Though a man seeks to become a Levi or a Cohen, he cannot become one, because his father was not a Levi or a Cohen; but if a man seeks to become righteous, even if he is a Heathen, he can do so, for righteousness does not come by inheritance, but of a man's own free will." 45)

The Midrash emphasizes that the attribute Zaddik "Righteous Ones" applies according to Isaiah 60, 21 to Israel, but according to Ezekiel 23, 45 likewise to the nations of the world. 46) All who of their own accord draw near to God, God draws near to them. Indeed every man can become a righteous man like Moses, or wicked like Jerobeam, he can be wise or foolish, merciful or cruel, base or noble. The creator does not determine whether a man is to become good or evil. 47) The

Rabbis teach that spiritual parentage is superior to physical parentage: The man who educates a child, moulds his spirit and thus becomes his spiritual parent; he is to be considered as the child's father. 48) In every case it is the spiritual, not the physical, quality that determines a person's value, for the spiritual substance comes from God, not from the racial heritage of his parents. 49)

Like the Rabbis, the Jewish Hellenist thinkers, especially Philo of Alexandria, emphasize that the dignity and sanctity of kinship based on common belief is far superior to that of blood relationship. It is that kinship of the spirit which is meant when Scripture describes all those who do what is pleasing and good in the eyes of the Lord as "Sons of God" (Deut. 3, 8). Philo frequently speaks of the higher unity of belief which transcends the lower unity of blood. 50) "In the Court where Truth presides kinship is not measured by blood, but by similarity of conduct and pursuit of the same objects (De Virt. 14, 195).

The Rabbinic attitude to other races is faithfully reflected in their attitude to Proselytes. 51) While there are on record a number of harsh utterances with regard to the acceptance of converts, caused by discouraging experiences with individual insincere Proselytes and by temporary political considerations, 52) the Rabbis on the whole were eager for Proselytes from every nation and race as long as they were moved by a genuine desire to embrace the faith of Israel. Judaism was successful in making a number of converts even from hated races, like Ammonites and Egyptians, while the greatest triumph of Jewish missionary efforts in Rabbinic times was the conversion of the royal family of Adiabene to the Jewish faith. 53) It is a characteristic Midrashic teaching that Israel by its conduct has to deserve its Proselytes. Israel's righteous deeds attracts Proselytes, while its sinful conduct repels the righteous from their midst. "When Israel performs the will of God, He looks round for the righteous among the nations of the world, like Jethro, Rahab, Ruth

or Antoninus, and makes them cleave to Israel. But if Israel disobey's God's will, he removes the righteous from them. 54) Famous, real or legendary converts to Judaism mentioned in Rabbinic literature include Nero, the Roman Emperor; the Emperor Antoninus, the royal friend of Rabbi Jehuda Hanassi; a Roman Senator called Ketia ben Shalom; the wife of the Roman Governor of Judea, Tineus Rufus, who, after her conversion, became the wife of Rabbi Akiba; Rabbi Jochanan ben Torata, a contemporary of Rabbi Akiba; Rabbi Jehuda ben Gerim, a pupil of Rabbi Simon ben Jochai; Aquilas, translator of the Bible into Greek; Onkelos, who rendered the Bible into Aramaic; Naaman, the Syrian General, who was healed by Elisha; even Nebuzaradan, the cruel Babylonian General who in 586 B.C. destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple, embraced Judaism and became a Proselyte of Righteousness! 55)

God loves and protects the Proselytes, the Rabbis teach, he is solicitous for their welfare; converts are as beloved by him as born Israelites or even dearer than born Israelites. The following beautiful allegory motivates God's love for the Proselyte: "A king had a herd of sheep and goats; one day a stag which was raised in the wilderness voluntarily joined the flock. The king loved the stag exceedingly and favoured it above all the other animals, explaining to those who asked: It is the custom of the sheep to graze in the pasture, but the stag dwells in the wilderness; to this stag who has joined us should we not be grateful that he has left the great wilderness where many stags and gazelles feed and has come to live among us? So too spoke the Holy One: I owe great thanks to the stranger in that he has left his father's house and has come to dwell among us, therefore I command in the Law: Love ye thy stranger." (Num. R. 8, 2.) God did not exile Israel among the nations for any other reason than that Proselytes should be added to them. "When Israel was exiled from their country, the ministering

Angels said to God: They worshipped idols even in their own country; now in exile they will do worse. God replied: I have confidence in my children that not only will they remain faithful to me, but bring others under my wing" (Pesikta Rabbati §35). The Jews will be punished if they do not spread the teachings of God among the Heathen as did the Patriarch Abraham, the shining example of proselytizing effort. "The nations of the world slept and did not come under the wings of the Shechina? Who woke them up so that they may come? Abraham." 56)

Because on one occasion Abraham arbitrarily excluded human beings from coming under the wings of the Shechina—an interpretation derived from Genesis 14, 21, in which the King of Sodom asked Abraham to give him the "souls," a request which implied his desire for conversion—Abraham was punished by the enslavement of his descendants to the Egyptians. 57) Characteristic is the following Rabbinic tradition 58): "Timna, a heathen princess, desired to be received into the Jewish faith, but was rejected by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. She then became the concubine of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and she bore him Amalek, who inflicted great harm on Israel. Why did this happen? the Rabbis ask. Because the Patriarchs ought not to have repelled her." The Revelation on Sinay, the Talmud explains, was a Covenant entered into with all subsequent generations of Israel and with all those who join the faith of Israel (Shabuoth 39a). According to one source, a precursor of the Messiah will be a Proselyte, Melchizedek, King of Salem (Genesis 17, 18). 59) The marriage of Joseph and Asnath, of Moses and Jethro's daughter, of Ruth and Boas, of Joshua and Rachab, are specially commended because, through the sincere conversion of the Gentile partner to Judaism—conversions assumed to have taken place out of genuine religious motives, like the conversion of Ruth 60) — they served to spread the knowledge of

God among the heathens. 61) Some Rabbinic sources emphasise that both the Messiah, descendant of David, as well as his precursor, the Messiah, descendant of Joseph, will be of mixed Gentile Jewish race: The first through Ruth the Moabitess, Boaz's wife, the ancestress of David; the second through Asnath the Egyptian, the wife of Joseph. 62) The famous saying in Matthew (23, 16): "The Pharisees compass land and sea to make on Proselyte" as well as various references in classical authors, Juvenal, Martial, Horace, Seneca and others, 63) point to an eager missionary activity of Palestinian Jews in the days of the Second Temple. Misplaced missionary zeal even led in the days of the Hasmonean Kings to the conversion of neighbouring people, Idumeans and Itureans, by force of arms. Indeed, Judaism was, in the words of the famous Christian scholar of Rabbinism, G. F. Moore, 64) the first great missionary religion of the Mediterranean world.

The failure of the Synagogue to extend its influence was mainly due to political causes: to the two abortive Palestinian risings against Rome (66-70 C.E. and 132-135 C.E.), and the subsequent Roman prohibition of Jewish teaching, as well as to the natural jealousy of the Nascent Church, which successfully paralysed the missionary efforts of the older religion and halted its development through severe prohibitive laws. Judaism was left with no option but to withdraw into a religious particularistic shell, guarding itself against dissolution by erecting a fence around the Jewish community. But Jewish particularism was never tainted with Racism. "It was not born of disloyalty to the wider vision of Deutero-Isaiah but of necessity, and its aim was not to confine Judaism to Jews, but to preserve Judaism for Jews; it was not inconsistent with a real interest in the pagan world and a deep desire to lead men of alien races unto God and to receive them into the fellowships of his people" (Rowley, *Israel's Mission*, p. 71).

There is on the whole no difference in law or social status between born Israelites and Proselytes. The posterity of Abraham is not determined by physical descent, but by spiritual affiliation to God's Covenant with Abraham. Having undergone the required rites of circumcision and immersion, the Proselyte is regarded like a newborn child, i.e., completely equal to the Jew, for the "destiny" (Mazzal) of every Proselyte was present at Mount Sinai. ⁶⁵) It was not the physical exodus of the Israelites from Egypt that was regarded as the decisive factor in God's plan for man's salvation, but the spiritual redemption from idolatry. Any Gentile who accepted Judaism could recite with the rest of the Israelites on the night of Passover "who redeemed us and who redeemed our forefathers," since Proselytes are regarded as the spiritual descendants of those whom God delivered from Egypt. ⁶⁶) Conversion obliterates any distinction of racial origin.

Proselytes and their descendants are fit to acquire the highest spiritual gift—the gift of prophecy: Obadyah, the Prophet, was, according to the Rabbis, a Proselyte of Edomite origin. Eight prophets, among them Jeremiah and the Prophetess Hulda, were descendants of Rahab, the immoral woman of Jericho, who had embraced Judaism and become the wife of Joshua. ⁶⁷) Repentance and sincere conversion is regarded as a grace against which no sin of any man, Jew or Gentile, was a bar: "God says to a heathen: Why did you not draw nigh to me? He answers: Because I was wicked and I was ashamed. God replies: Were you worse than Rahab, who received robbers and practised immorality? And did she not draw near to me, and did I not receive her, and did I not cause to descend from her prophets and righteous men? And were you worse than Yethro, who was priest to an idol, and when he came nigh to me, did I not receive him and I caused to descend from him prophets and righteous men?

And when Ruth, the Moabitess, came to me, did I not receive her and cause kings to be descended from her? 68)

Jehuda Halevi (11th century) is probably the only Jewish thinker who adopts a near-racist attitude and does not accord Proselytes equal rank with Jews on the spiritual plane. Only Jews, he teaches, are specially privileged to attain the gift of prophecy. Proselytes may become learned and pious men, but never prophets. 69) Yet Jehuda Halevi's opinion is not born out by Biblical sources and contradicted by the entire Rabbinic literature. The Bible ascribes prophecy even to heathens, e.g., Bileam, the prophet. The prophet Joel (3, 1) declares that God will pour out His spirit over all flesh. The Talmud (Baba Bathra 15b) enumerates seven prophets of Gentile stock, among them Job. An old Midrash comments on the verse Deut. 34, 10): And there has not arisen since a prophet in Israel like Moses: "not in Israel, but among the nations, namely, Bileam" (Sifre ad loc). 70) Maimonides, the leading thinker of medieval Rabbinism, does not consider prophecy as an exclusive prerogative of Israel, but a gift attainable by all men. 71)

There are very few traces in Jewish Law that betray ill-feeling or prejudice against the convert. 72) There are, e.g., some discriminatory measures excluding the convert from the office of kindom—a matter of pure theory in Rabbinic times—and from the judicial office. But it has been rightly pointed out that unwillingness to put converts in public office does not indicate active animosity. Most States debar naturalised citizens from holding the highest offices in the State, without being hostile to aliens. 73) On the other hand, converts were accepted even from nations towards whom Jews felt a historically justifiable hostility.

Wishing to attract as many converts as possible and to bring all humanity under the wings of the one true God of Righteousness, the Rabbis stumbled over the fact that some

people, the Kanaanites and Amonites, Moabites, Edomites and Egyptians, were proscribed by the Bible as ineligible for intermarriage (Deut. 20, 16; 23, 4). Yet already in the Tannaitic period these prohibitive laws were regarded as invalid. The Mishnah reports that Judah, a convert from the people of Amon, approached the heads of the Academy of Yabne with the question whether he might be permitted to "enter the Congregation," i.e., to marry a Jewish woman. Rabbi Joshua ben Hananya then made the decisive declaration that Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, had during his conquering expeditions broken down all boundaries and mixed together all the races and thus rendered all Biblical prohibitions against intermarriage with specific nations inoperative. 74) In order to overcome the legal disabilities of the proscribed peoples, the Rabbis resorted to the theory that all races are now indistinguishably intermingled; consequently all family stocks from whatever people they may derive are to be regarded as eligible for intermarriage. Rabbi Akiba reaffirmed this principle of the Diffusion of Races and applied it in practice with regard to the hated Egyptians, by admitting the Egyptian convert Minjamin into the Jewish fold and calling him "my son." 75) Maimonides, the great medieval codifier of Jewish Law, established this principle as a fundamental statute and removed all restrictions to intermarriage from all peoples, provided of course that the non-Jewish marriage partners become sincere Proselytes to Judaism. 76)

The broadminded and all-inclusive doctrine of the Rabbis on the relation of race and faith finds its normative expression in a responsum 77) written by Maimonides to a Proselyte, named Obadja: "I received the question of the wise scholar, Obadja, the Proselyte. You ask as to whether you being a Proselyte should utter the Prayers: Our God and God of our Fathers, who has separated us from the Nations, who has brought us out of Egypt, since your fathers were non-Jews. Pronounce all prayers as

they are written, and do not change anything. 78) Your prayer or blessing should be the same as that of any other Israelite, regardless whether you pray in private or conduct a service. The explanation is as follows: Abraham, our father, taught mankind the true belief and the unity of God, repudiating idolatry; through him many of his own household and also others were guided to keep the ways of the Lord to do righteousness and justice. Thus he who becomes a Proselyte and he who confesses the unity of God is a disciple of Abraham, our father. Such persons are of his household. Just as Abraham has influenced his contemporaries through his word and teaching, so he is leading to believe all the future generations through the testament he gave to his children and to his household. In this sense Abraham is the father both of his descendants, who follow his ways, and of his disciples and all the Proselytes. You should therefore pray: Our God and our God of our Fathers, for Abraham is also your Father. In no respect is there a difference between us and you. And certainly you should say: Who has given unto us the Law, because the Law was given to us and the Proselytes alike, as it is said: As for the congregation, there shall be one statute both for you and for the stranger who lives with you; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One Law and one ordinance shall be both for you and for the stranger that lives with you. Keep in mind that most of our ancestors that left Egypt were idol worshippers; they mingled with Egyptian heathens and imitated their ways until God sent Moses, the Master of all the Prophets. He separated us from these nations, initiated us into the belief in God, us and all the Proselytes, and gave us one Law. Do not think little of your origin. We are descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but your descent is from the creator, for in the words of Isaiah: "One shall say I am the Lord and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."

In a letter to his pupil, Chisdai Halevi, 79) Maimonides stresses the fundamental tenet of Judaism that what matters in the eyes of God is only the purity of the heart: 80) "You ask about the Gentiles: Keep in mind that God required the heart (Sanhedrin 106b) and that everything depends on the intention of the heart. Therefore our teachers said: The Pious among the Gentiles have a portion in the future world (Tosefta Sanhedrin XIII 2), that is to say, those who have attained the required status of knowledge of the creator and endeavoured to achieve ethical qualities. There is no doubt that he who achieves ethical qualities and the right ways of life and the right wisdom of belief in God, merits the future world. And so our teachers said: A heathen who studies the Law is equal to the High Priest (Sanhedrin 59a). The aim of the Law of Moses is the religious perfection of the person."

These views of the famous codifier may rightly be regarded as the historically evolved accepted doctrine of Rabbinic Judaism on Race.

II.

Bible and Rabbinic literature contain a number of references to black-skinned people, called Kushim 81) (Ethiopians), which throw some light on a special aspect of race sentiment, the attitude to people with different colour. The Kushim were generally not considered as an inferior race, but, on the contrary, referred to as Gibborim, Mighty Men (Jeremiah 46, 9), Anshay Middah, Men of Stature (Isaiah 45, 14), 82) tall and of glossy skin, terrible and sturdy (Isaiah 18, 12). 83) The Israelites had only occasional contacts with black-skinned people 84) and therefore looked at a dark skin with the eye of wonder and amazement, 85) perhaps even admiration, 86) not of group prejudice. The black complexion of the Negro is regarded as something unusual, the very symbol of an unchangeable quality. The prophet Jeremiah (13, 23)

wishing to denounce the wickedness of a certain class of incorrigible evildoers compared them with the spots of the leopard and the skin of the Kushi: "Can the Kushi change his skin, or the leopard his spots, then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil" (13, 23). Similarly the Rabbis, in describing the permanent character of a certain kind of bodily injury, compare it to the permanent quality of a negro's blackness. 87)

On the other hand, the striking difference in colour between various groups of human beings affords the Prophets the opportunity of proclaiming their belief in the equality of all races before God in spite of physical distinctions. Amos, the earliest among the writing Prophets (8th century B.C.E.), exhorting the Israelites that they should not expect special favours from God, compares them with the Ethiopians, Philistines and Arameans, all of whom have been recipients of Divine mercies: "Are ye not like the children of Ethiopians unto Me, children of Israel," saith the Lord. "Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir" (9, 7). This memorable passage contains two important admonitions to the Israelites: Do not imagine, declares the Prophet, that you are more worthy than the far distant black-skinned Ethiopian; remember that in the eyes of God there is no difference between races and nations. All men are equal in the sight of the Lord without regard to outward physical attributes. Beware of the idea that you were favoured by God through His special intervention in your history and may commit sins with impunity. God is impartial and universal. He did the same redeeming service to the Philistines and the Arameans and he will surely turn away from you if you are disloyal to his moral demands. The Covenant between God and Israel is not irrevocable. In the eyes of the Lord there is complete parity between the nations; there is neither

colour bar nor favouritism. God looks into the hearts of the nations, not at the colour of their skin.

We find references to negro soldiers and negro servants in the service of Kings and Princes of Israel. Joab, David's commander-in-chief, sends a negro soldier to report to David of the successful outcome of the battle against Absalom (II. Sam. 18, 22). According to the Rabbis, the two Scribes at the Court of King Solomon (I. Kings 4, 3) were Kushites. 88) A negro, Eved Melech, officer at the Court of King Zedekiah, is the only pious man at that Court, anxious to deliver the Prophet Jeremiah from the dungeon into which he was cast by the nobles of Jerusalem. The negro intercedes with the King to deliver Jeremiah from his prison, and the King accedes to his request; whereupon Eved Melech rescues the Prophet from the pit. As a reward, Jeremiah assures the negro that his life will be spared when the kingdom of Judah is overthrown (Jeremiah 38). Eved Melech, the pious Ethiopian, became the hero of a popular Jewish legend. 89) As a reward for rescuing the Prophet when his life was in jeopardy, he was miraculously saved from the hands of the Babylonians and became one of the eleven Immortals who entered Paradise without tasting death. According to another tradition, Eved Melech was one of the ten heathen rulers who became converts to Judaism.

The most characteristic Rabbinic attitude to black-skinned people is one of amazement at the variety of human beings. The black skin of a negro appears as something unusual and distinct, 90) rarely as repelling or inferior. The Rabbis are fond of comparing the physical distinctiveness of the negro with the moral distinction of the Jewish people or some outstanding Jewish personalities. Why, they ask, does the Prophet Amos compare the Israelites with Kushim? Just as the Ethiopians are conspicuously different in their skin from other men, so do the children of Israel differ manifestly in their good

deeds from the heathen peoples of the earth. In praise of King Saul, the Rabbis remark: Just as a negro differs in his skin from the rest of men, so was Saul outstanding in his deeds and his appearance, as it is said: from his shoulder above taller than all people (I. Kings 9, 2). Just as a negro is different in his skin, so was Zipporah, Moses' wife, excellent in her deeds and her beauty. The same comparison is also made with reference to the righteous King Zidkiah and Baruch Ben Neriah, Jeremiah's secretary. 91)

It is evident that if the physical traits of the black-skinned man were generally considered repulsive, a comparison between his physical distinctiveness and the moral excellence of Biblical personalities would be absurd. According to this dominant Rabbinic tradition, the blackness of the negro is not regarded as a negative quality, but as a characteristic physical attribute which easily lends itself to comparison with any other unusual quality.

Several Rabbinic references bear out the view that the Jews in general had no consciousness of the inherent superiority of a white skin. They registered a colour line ranging from the white-skinned Germans (Northern Europeans) to the black-skinned Ethiopians, and regarded themselves as belonging to the middle of that line. There is a very significant Mishnah 92) suggesting that the Rabbis distinguished between the white skin of the European, the black skin of the negro, and the brownish complexion of the Oriental: If a leper has to be examined by the Priest for signs of leprosy, the Priest must differentiate between a white man, a black man and a man of medium colour. In a white-skinned German the bright spot of leprosy appears as dull white; in a black-skinned Kushi what it dull white appears as bright white. Rabbi Ishmael says: The children of Israel are like boxwood, neither black nor white, but of an intermediate shade. Rabbi Akiba furnishes an example: Painters have colours wherewith they depict figures either in black or white or

the intermediate shades. This Mishnah clearly makes a distinction between the black skin of the negro, the tanned pigmentation of the Israelite and the white complexion of the North European, without implying any difference in human values. Skin colour appears as a neutral attribute of the body, nothing else.

A similar view about the colour division of men and the place of the Jews in the colour scheme of humanity is reflected in the following Midrash: 93) God blessed Noah and his sons and gave them the whole earth as an inheritance. He blessed Sem and his sons to be black and handsome 94) and gave them the inhabited earth; He Blessed Ham and his sons to be black like ravens 95) and gave them the coast of the sea. He blessed Japhet and his sons, all of whom are white and beautiful, and gave them as inheritance the pasture ground and the fields. 96) This tradition describes the Semites as medium dark, 97) lighter than the Hamites, who are quite black, and darker than the Japhetites, who are very light. 98) White pigmentation appears by no means as the standard colour of humanity, nor does the white man stand on the top of the human scale. God blesses all men and apporitions to each section its rightful inheritance; the colour division does not correspond to any scale of group excellence. 99) Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, all sons of Sem, must have had a brownish medium shade complexion.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Rabbinic literature contains references to teachers of the Law who were of coloured origin. The Talmud mentions a certain Rav Judah Hindoa, 100) a Babylonian Amora of the fifth century, who was a Proselyte 101) and, as the name indicates, a Hindu, or possibly of negro stock. 102) He is quoted as relating a seafarer tale in the Munchhausen style concerning a sea monster, a miraculous bird and a precious stone. 103) According to a medieval Rabbinic authority, Rabenu Tam, 104) this Rav Judah the Hindu was the

father of another well-known Babylonian Rabbi, Samuel Ben Yehudah, who is frequently mentioned as a man of incorruptible honesty. The Rabbis show no compunction in acknowledging the existence of teachers of the law descended from Indian or negro converts. Rav Judah the Hindu is the patron of black-skinned Jews of Cochin (India), who named their synagogues after their Talmudic compatriot. 105)

The concept of the incidental quality of skin colour also emerges from the following tales. It happened that black-skinned parents had a white child and the father suspected his wife of adultery; but Rabbi Akiba dispelled his suspicion by drawing his attention to the white images in their bedroom which caused the wife to give birth to a white child, because, according to ancient belief, the children resemble the thing which the mother has in mind at the time of conception. 106) The same explanation was given on the occasion of the birth of a black child of white parents. 107) Here colour of skin appears as an accident of heredity, sometimes due to a physical circumstance beyond the control of the parents, in any case a casual factor without any intrinsic moral significance. The possibilities of parents having children of a different colour is also given consideration in ritual law: If black-skinned people procreate a white child, they should say the following blessing: Blessed be he who does good deeds. If a black child is born to white parents, the following benediction should be pronounced: Blessed be he who creates different kinds of creatures. 108)

There is, naturally, no accounting for taste. According to some Rabbinic views, the appellation Kushi denotes the quality of beauty. 109) Other Rabbinic voices regard the black skin as unattractive 110) and, according to one opinion, even as a punishment for the misdeeds of Ham, considered by some as the ancestor of the black races. But, as will be shown, these views are either opposed by contrary opinions

or counter-balanced by statements stressing the worth of the individual, irrespective of race or appearance.

According to a Rabbinic legend reflecting an aesthetic dislike of the negro, the dark-hued skin and the unattractive appearance of the Hamites was a punishment inflicted on Ham and his descendants for Ham's unchaste behaviour in the Ark. 111) Yet, as a compensation, the Biblical curse of perpetual slavery pronounced against Ham for his disrespectful act towards his father, 112) (Genesis 9/25) was removed from his descendants: Because Ham's eyes gazed on his father's nakedness, they were reddened; because his mouth told of it, his lips were curved; because he turned his face to gaze, his hair and beard became singed . . . But since God's mercies are over all his works, God had mercy on Ham, went back on Ham's punishment and said: Since he has delivered himself over to slavery, let him go free in return for the eye which saw, and the mouth that spoke, for a slave is released if his master injures his eye or his tooth (Exodus 21/26) 113) Another tradition expresses the view that the curse pronounced against the Hamites can be made inoperative by pious deeds and righteous conduct. Eliezer, the Canaanite, Abraham's servant, counteracted the curse by righteous deeds; when he heard of the damnation of Ham, he joined Abraham, studied the Law, was blessed by God and became a "Zaddik." Thus the curse resting upon Eliezer as a descendant of Ham was transformed into a blessing and Eliezer entered Paradise as an Immortal. 114) Asenath, the daughter of the Egyptian Potiphar, a descendant of Ham, embraced Judaism, became renowned for her piety and was called Zaddeketh, "righteous woman." She is regarded as a model for all sincere converts to Judaism. 115)

These Rabbinic traditions endeavour to divest the Biblical curse against Ham of the character of permanency. God has repented of the curse pronounced against Ham and restored to his descendants the chance of gaining

freedom. The righteous among them, like Eliezer and Asenat, can achieve salvation through their own merit and even attain the highest bliss.

But whether, from the aesthetic point of view, a dark skin is considered as neutral, attractive or repellent, it is spiritual beauty that counts: Commenting on the verse in Song of Songs (I. 5), "I am black, but comely," the Midrash asks: How can a person be black and at the same time comely? The explanation is given that blackness and comeliness do not apply to the same person or the same situation. The Jew is black with anxiety during the week, but comely on the Sabbath; black all the year round, yet comely on the Day of Atonement; black in this world, yet comely in the future world; black as far as his own deeds are concerned, but comely through the deeds of his fathers. But mere outward blackness, though it may appear unattractive, does not indicate inner unworthiness. On the contrary: "Just as the tents of Kedar (Arabia) appear outwardly black and ugly, mere rags, but inside they are full of precious stones, so the scholars of the Torah, though they may look unattractive and black, yet inwardly they possess true wealth: Talmud, Halachot, Midrashot, Mishnah, Mikra, Torah, Toseftot, Agadot." 116) This comparison underscores the thought that human beings cannot be judged by outward appearance, that outward ugliness may be only skin deep and is often amply compensated by inward beauty and spiritual wealth. "Man looketh on the outward appearance," teaches the Book of Samuel (I, 16, 7), "but the Lord looketh on the heart." "Praise no man for his beauty," exhorts Ben Sira (XI, 2-3), "and abhor no man for his appearance." The well-known Talmudic story of R. Joshua and the Princess points to the moral that outward beauty may often be an impediment to true spiritual achievement: God often keeps glorious wisdom in an ugly shape, just as good wine is preserved in earthen, not in golden, vessels. 117) Whoever refers disparagingly to the ungainly appearance of a

fellowman, has insulted the creator of all the human beings, the "artisan who created all human vessels," and is guilty of sinful pride and vanity. 118) Human beings must be judged by standard of ethics, not of aesthetics. "In the eyes of God," teaches the Midrash, "neither beauty nor wealth are acceptable, but only fear of sin," as it is written in Proverbs (31, 30): "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." 119) The Rabbis were not devoid of a natural sense of aesthetic appreciation. But they extolled the beauty of Holiness and their ruling passion was the love of goodness. Israel, they teach, is beautiful through observing the Commandments, through loving deeds, repentance and good works, as it is written (Deut. 1, 15): Thou art beautiful, my love. 120)

The Bible relates a curious episode from the life of Moses bearing on the problem of colour. Moses married a black-skinned (Kushite) woman, and Miriam and Aaron had spoken against him "because of the Kushite woman he had married." But God sides with Moses and summons his brother and sister to the Tent of the Meeting to voice His displeasure and to pronounce punishment (Num. 12, 1-9). This puzzling incident of the divinely sanctioned marriage between Moses and a black woman challenged the exegetical interest of the Rabbis, who endeavoured to identify the anonymous second wife of Moses and explain the reason for Miriam and Aaron's complaint. The interpretations offered by the Rabbis reflect two tendencies. One exegetical trend takes "Kushit" literally as referring to a black-skinned woman; the other, somewhat embarrassed by the Biblical account, interprets the word Kushit in a different manner so as to divest it of its literal meaning. According to a group of legends preserved in Hellenistic as well as in Rabbinic literature, 121) Moses had indeed married a black-skinned woman, the Queen of Ethiopia; having shown exceptional gallantry in the war between Ethiopia and Egypt, Moses became

King of that country and husband of the Queen-widow. According to other interpretations, the Kushite woman is no other than Moses' first wife, the Midianite Zipporah. 122) With a noteworthy lack of colour prejudice, medieval commentators explain the designation Kushit, by the fact that the Midianites are distinctly dark-skinned and Zipporah was very swarthy and looked like a negress (Kushit). 123) Some exegetes hold that the attribute Kushit does not connote blackness of skin, but symbolises an unusual outstanding quality, comparable to the strange blackness of the negro skin. Zipporah was as distinguished by her pious deeds and beautiful appearance as the negro is distinct by the colour of his body. Therefore she was called Kushit. 124) According to other Rabbis, the appellation "Kushit" is used in an anaphrastic sense, as a euphemism for beautiful 125) in order to counteract the pernicious influence of an evil eye.

In those Rabbinic sources which identify the Kushit with Zipporah, there is an unmistakable tendency to exonerate Moses, the prophetic leader of Israel, from any reproach of a gratuitous union with a foreign woman. Yet, as shown above, the main objection against marriage with foreign women was not racial arrogance, but religious misgivings. 126) Whether in this episode the Kushite extraction of Moses' second wife caused an added difficulty, cannot be with certainty inferred. The question of inter-marriage between members of different colour groups is not discussed in Rabbinic literature, as, from the point of view of religious law, it had no significance. In the popular view, union of black and white may have been looked upon as unseemly: A Kushite slave, the Midrash relates, told her friend that her white master intended to divorce his wife and marry her because he had once seen his wife when her hands were blackened. If the blackened hands of your mistress repelled your master, answered the friend, how would he marry you, who are born black all over? 127) Yet, according to law, difference

of colour was no bar to marriage: Maimonides expressly decrees that every person, male or female, who sincerely adopts the Jewish faith, may marry into the Jewish fold, "whether the person be an Edomite, Egyptian, Ammonite, Moabite, Kushi (black-skinned Ethiopian), or member of any other nation." 128) Marriage between black and white must have been a very rare occurrence in Jewish life—the "white" and the black Jews in Cochin do not intermarry, 129) but such a union would not constitute a breach of religious law.

III.

It is hardly practicable to apply directly Rabbinic views on race and colour to the baffling realities of a multi-racial society with varying standards of education such as exists in the Union of South Africa. The intricate problem of inter-racial adjustment, resulting from difference in colour, is a comparatively new experience in Jewish life. Yet the teachings of Judaism leave no doubt that a pattern of race relations based on the theory of an ineradicable biological inferiority of one race is out of harmony with the ethical traditions of Biblical-Rabbinic doctrine. It is contrary to the accepted moral standards of historic Judaism to postulate an unalterable inherent difference between higher and lower races. The dominant trend of Jewish ethical doctrine has never recognised any purely racial trait as significant in appraising the worth of a human personality or a human group. Judaism is not concerned with a man's race, but with a man himself. God, it emphatically teaches, looks into the hearts of men, not at the colour of their skin. What matters in the evaluation of the worth of a human being is the nobility of his character and the integrity of his conduct, not the racial attributes of his body. There is no valid correlation of physical features with mental and moral characteristics; race in itself is not indicative of the worth of an individual, neither can it determine the moral or intellectual

quality of a human group. All human beings on earth are one kind — mankind — and bear within themselves the same divine qualities. Every soul born into this world is equally precious in the sight of God. While there are boundless varieties between individual men, and many social and biological differences between nations and races, all men are united by the divine spark in their soul — called the "Image of God." The idea expressed in the Biblical story that all men were created in the Divine Image, is accepted as one of the fundamental principles of Judaism; it is supplemented by the Commandment: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Leviticus 19, 18). 130) Every human being, reflecting the image of his Maker, has within himself a divine spark and is potentially able to render service to the cause of humanity and the cause of God. By loving men, God's creation, we manifest our love for God, the Creator. The Torah of Israel, Rabbi Eleazar teaches, is a Law of Love (Sukka 49b).

An unbiased examination of Jewish sources bears out the thesis that the doctrine of a biologically justified supremacy of one group over the other is incompatible with the leading thoughts of Rabbinism. The Hebrew Bible does indeed uphold the permanent division of men into separate nations as an essential part of God's creation (Gen. 10). But race-prejudice is as un-Jewish, as surely it is un-Christian. There is no justification for basing collective consciousness of racial group superiority on Biblical teachings. Whatever group antagonism is to be found in the Bible, it is primarily religious, not racial. Besides, Jews and Christians read the Bible in the light of the interpretations of their traditional exegesis, which added to the Scriptures the fruits of centuries of spiritual development. Neither the historic Jewish nor the historic Christian faith admits of any racial interpretation of Scripture doctrine; neither the Rabbis nor the Apostles or Churchfathers consider race as an index of character or mind. The teaching of the fatherhood of God and the

brotherhood of men are as essential in Christianity as they are in Judaism. 131) Both St. John and Rabbi Simlay proclaim that God is love. 132)

All human beings are objects of God's abiding concern. "Gentile or Israelite, man or woman, slave or handmaid, God remembers the sacrifice of Isaac and pardons everyone," 133) is the preachment of Judaism. "He has made of one blood all nations of men," teaches Paul of Tarsus, "to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17, 26), and "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, male nor female, for ye are all one in Jesus" (Galatians 3, 28). Had Paul lived in a society of many colours, he would have emphatically added: There is neither white nor brown nor black. 134) It deserves to be stressed that the faith of Islam has remained free from colour prejudice and has never recognised before God any difference of race. All believers in the prophet, white brown or black, are equal in the sight of Allah. Islam has thus become a powerful force in unifying diverse racial groups and implementing the doctrine of the brotherhood of men across the cruel cleavage of race and colour. 135)

The Jewish people must be ever mindful of the fact that it had been treated in Nazi Germany as an outcast and subjected to systematic genocide on account of alleged biological deficiency of the Semites for which there was no remedy in the eyes of the Aryan master race. The Jewish people should scrupulously refrain from becoming accessories to any acts of oppression, injustice or humiliation, committed in the name of race, and remain faithful to the ethical fundamentals of their religious heritage which alone lends significance to their continuous survival among the peoples of the earth, bestows dignity upon their millennial sufferings and sheds universal glory on their triumphant emergence as a sovereign nation.

The most authentic interpreters of Judaism have always believed that Jewish existence cannot exhaust itself

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in more self-preservation, but that Judaism has a distinctive contribution to make to the spiritual life and social progress of mankind. By upholding true human values, by advancing inter-racial harmony and assisting in the gradual advancement of all men towards greater freedom, wider opportunity and higher standard of living, Jews will give practical expression to the leading ethical principles of Hebraic tradition. Because Judaism believes in one God and one humanity, its adherents should endeavour to develop a sense of kinship with all races and make every injustice their own concern.

In the end of days, proclaims a Rabbinic prophecy, ¹³⁶⁾ the white-skinned German will grasp the hands of the black-skinned Kushi, and the Kushi will grasp the hand of the German; the one will firmly join the hand of the other and together they will worship the one true God of Righteousness, who is the Lord of all races and Father of all men.

NOTE ON RACE AND COLOUR IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

The leading thinkers of classical Greece upheld the doctrine of a physiological distinction between Hellenes and Barbarians. The Hellenic character of the early city state was conceived on a racial basis. Plato regards any division between Hellenes as unnatural, but war against Barbarians as fully justified. Aristotle advises his pupil Alexander of Macedonia to treat Barbarians like "animals and plants" and to consider Hellenes as the only people worthy of freedom and destined for domination. Herodotus ascribes to the Hellenes the possession of a finer nature, a higher culture, a more developed reason. (1, 60). The idea of an inherent distinction between Hellenes and Barbarians, prominent in Plato's and Aristotle's system of thought, was superseded in the post-classical period by the concept of the cultural, not racial definition of Hellenism. Hellenism became to be considered not as an inalienable race character which can never be transmitted to the "lesser breeds"—the Barbarians—but a spiritual quality to be acquired by every human being. Any Barbarian could raise himself into a Hellene, any Hellene could degenerate into a Barbarian. The difference between Greeks and Barbarians appears no longer as fundamental and ordained by nature. This universal conception of Hellenism is already foreshadowed in the famous assertion of the Athenian orator Isocrates (4th century B.C.): "Athens had brought it about that the name Hellenes suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title Hellenes is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share

a common blood." According to Plutarch, Alexander, disregarding Aristotle's advice, refused to treat Barbarians as a master, but impressed upon his subjects to regard the good as kinsmen and the bad as foreigners, so that the distinction between Greek and Barbarian was no longer to be marked by cloak or shield or dagger, but the mark of the Greek was to be virtue and of the Barbarian the opposite. Raiment and food, marriage and ways of life were to be shared by all through the mixture of blood and offspring.

The sense of universal human brotherhood found its noblest expression in the writings of the stoic philosophers, Zeno, Epictet, Seneca, above all in the immortal *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the Emperor-Philosopher of Rome. The Jewish Hellenist Philo, perhaps under the influence of stoic thinkers, spoke of the unity of belief which transcends the unity of blood. (*De Nobilitate*). Against the division of men into Hellenes and Barbarians in the name of race, Paul of Tarsus affirms their unification in the name of faith. *Romans* 1, 14.

Contact between the nations of classical antiquity and Negroes were infrequent. The impression which the Negro made was due to his rarity and unusual appearance: *Quis enim Aethiopas, antequam cerneret, credidit?* Who would have believed in the existence of the Ethiopians, before he saw them? Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 7, 1. On the whole, references in classical literature do not evince a contemptuous tone towards black-skinned people. Homer (*Ilias* 1, 423-24) calls the Ethiopians a blameless race. He as well as Herodot (7, 70) differentiate between Eastern and Western (Asiatic and African) Ethiopians, a fact characteristic for the loose usage of the term Ethiops, comparable to the geographical inaccuracy with which the word Kushi is employed in Jewish sources. Cp. below note 102. Herodot states that among the Ethiopians are to be found the handsomest and longest-lived men

(3, 20)—perhaps a romantic idealisation of a distant people. Occasionally the white man may have jeered at the black: *Derideat Aethiopam albus*. Juvenal 2, 27. But it has been rightly observed that the colour feeling that seems to have come into the modern world with the slave trade, was non-existent among either Greeks or Romans. It was status, free or slave, that counted, not race or colour. It was civilisation-pride against the Barbarians that moved the Hellenistic-Roman world, not race pride. Terence, the dark-skinned African and former slave, who coined the sublime sentence: "I am a man, nothing human is alien to me," was accepted in the best Roman society of the second century. Cp. Lord Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* p. 136f; Haarhoff, *Stranger at the Gate*, p. 24, 63f, 100; Beardsley, *The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilisation* (John Hopkins University Studies in Archaeology, No. 4).

The humane spirit, which constitutes the essential element in Western civilisation, is the resultant of the two greatest spiritual influences of antiquity: Hebraic Religion and Stoic Philosophy.

NOTES

1) Ruth 1, 4; 4, 15, 22; Genesis 41, 50; Exodus 2, 21; Numbers 12, 1; 1. Kings 14, 21; 1. Chronicles 4, 18; Talmud Megilla 13a. — As the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabba are now available in English translations, references to these sources are of interest also to the non-specialist reader.

2) Cp. note 6.

3) Targum Yonathan ad Exodus 34, 16.

4) Cp. Y. Kaufmann, *Golah Ve Nechar*; H. E. Ginsberg, *New Trends in Biblical Criticism*, Commentary, September, 1950, p. 282; Rav Zair, *Toldoth Ha-Halacha* 1, 302, believes that Ezra's decrees were prompted by lack of a ritual for conversion of women.

5) Ezras decrees were contrary to the Biblical law (Deut. 23, 5), which prohibits only intermarriage with Amonites and Moabites; nor was it in harmony with later Halacha which restricted that prohibition to men. Cp. Freund in *Adolf Schwarz Festschrift* p. 168.

6) Mishna Yad. IV. 4; Tosefta Kid V. 4; Ber. 28a; Yeb. 76a; Maimonides, *Issure Biah*, 12, 17 and 25.

7) Hertz's *Commentary* ad Genesis Ch. 10.

8) Mishna Sanhedrin 4, 9; Sanhedrin 38a; Tosefta ib. 8, 4.—Wilberforce, the English anti-slavery crusader, quoted defenders of slavery who sought to argue that the negro was not a descendant of Adam. Cp. Montefiore, *Fourth Ezra*, p. 49.

9) Sanhedrin 38a; Tanchuma Pikude 3; Targum Yerushalmi to Gen. 2, 7. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5, 15. This Agadah is reminiscent of the cosmopolitan creed of the cynics. Asked what was his country, Diogenes replied: I am a citizen of the World.

10) Sabbath 31a; Aboth di R. Nathan Ch. 15. Hillel is in agreement with the School of Hippocrates which ascribed physical, ethical and intellectual group characters to environment, especially to variations of geographical and

climatic conditions; the Egyptians were forced into their physique by heat, the Scythians by cold. Cp. Toynbee in Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics X.555; Haarhoff, Stranger at the Gate, p. 16; Altman, Melilla 1 p. 2.

11) Quoted in Bloch, Israel and the Nations, p. 366.

12) History of Rome, 37, 17. Cp. Elbogen, Lehren des Judentums, 5, 343; G. F. Moore, Judaism 111, 63.

13) Tana d'be Eliyahu Ch. 9 (ed. Friedman, p. 48). This Midrash, though a late compilation, contains old material, Cp. Zunz, Gottesdienstliche Vortraege, p. 119.

14) Esau is traditionally identified with Rome. Cp. Ginzberg, Legends, 5, 272.

15) Aboda Zara 10b.

16) Tanch. Deut. 3.

17) Cp. Maimonides, Hilchot Melachim 8, 10. The Torah was given to Israel and to the Proselytes, with reference to Numbers 15, 15.

18) Sanhedrin, 56a; 105b; Tosefta Aboda Zara, 8. 4. The Noachidic laws already in the apocryphal book of Jubiles 7, 20f.

19) Note ad Sanhedrin ib. in English translation of Talmud (Soncino edition).

20) Sifra, Achre Mot 13, 4.

21) Tana d'be Eliyahu Ch. 14; (ed. Friedman, p. 65). Yalkut Genesis 76. Cp. Maimonides Hilchot Shemitta, 13, 13: Every human being, everyone of the dwellers on earth who walks in the straight path, is as sanctified as the Priests and Levites, and will receive his rewards from the Lord in this Life and in Eternity.

22) On one occasion the sages wanted to purchase gems for a priestly garment, the ephod, at a huge profit to Dama, but the key was under the pillow upon which his father was asleep, and the son refused to disturb him.

23) Kiddushin 31a; Aboda Zara 23b; Berachot 8b; Sanhedrin 39b; Megilla 16a, b.

24) Deut. Rabba 4; Sota 31a; Baba Bathra 15b; Cp. Ginzberg Legends 2, 225.

25) Commentary to Torah, section 60. The same view is expressed by Menasse ben Israel: all righteous men, Israelites as well as heathens, will be resurrected and saved.

Cp. Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 284f; Guttmann, *Das Judentum und seine Umwelt*, p. 169. Hugo Grotius, the famous Dutch Jurist, who was influenced by Menasse ben Israel, took the Noachitic Commandments as the foundation of his theory of Natural Law. Cp. Wiener, *Lehren des Judentums* V, 446. Husik, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 2. 381f.

26) Sukka 55b; Baba Bathra 10b.

27) Sifre ad Deut. 20, 18; Sota 35b.

28) Pirke di R. Eliezer Ch. 43.

29) Pesikta Rabbati to Ex. 12, 29 (ed. Friedman, p. 196a)

30) The Midrashic source for this custom is Pesikta di Rav Kahana (ed. Buber 189a.) Guttmann, *ib.* p. 119 quotes only Ture Zahab to Orach Chayim 490. Other reasons for the recital of Half-Hallel discussed in Arachin 10a.

30a) Cp. p. 42.

31) Exodus R. 19, 4.

32) Mechilta Yetro Bachodesh 1, 5. Further references to Rabbinic Universalism for the general reader: Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud* p. 62f, Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* 80f; R. Levy, *Deutero-Isaiah* p. 53f.

33) Cp. Bergman, *Jeudische Apologetik*, p. 131f.

34) Cp. H. Greenberg's fine essay in *Jewish Frontier* 1945 p. 12f.

35) Ethical reasons for the conquest of Canaan also in Josephus' *Antiquities* 8, 102f; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* III, 29. Cp. also Rav Zair, *ib.* 1. 229.

36) Kaminka, *Keneset Lezecher Bialik* 1939 p. 357, believes that the tradition containing R. Meir's Gentile extraction must have had a factual basis.

37) Gittin 57b; Sanhedrin 96b and parallels. Cp. Hyman, *Toldoth Tanaim Ve-Amoraim*, pp. 988, 1147.

38) Cp. Bacher, *Agadat Ha-Tanaim* 2, 1 p. 5 note 24.

39) Yoma 71b.

40) Bamidbar R. 8, 4.

41) Beza 32b.

42) Kidushin 36a. This genuine Rabbinic thought is reflected in John the Baptist's saying: "God can raise up children of Abraham out of stones." Mathew 3, 9.

43) Cant. R. 1, 6; Numbers, R. 10, 1; Tanchuma Chukkat 3; Tanchuma Zav 10; Cp. Sabbath 166a; Deut. R. 36, 4. More on this subject see my study *Les Chatiments des*

enfants pour les fautes der parents in *Revue des Etudes Juives* 1933, p. 47.

44) *Nedarim* 81a.

45) *Num. R.* 8, 2; *Midrash Tehillin* ad *Psalm* 146, 8.

46) *Lev. R.* 5, 7.

47) *Sifre Behaalotcha* 78; Cp. *Maimonides*, *Hilchot Teshuba* 5, 2.

48) *Exodus R.* 46, 5.

49) *Nidda* 31a; Cp. also *Hirsch*, *Rabbinic Psychology*, p. 187f.

50) *Spec. Leg.* 1, 58; *De Nobilitate* 5, 236. *Wolfson*, *Philo* 2, 357f.—*Josephus*, *Contra Apionem* 2, 29.

51) Proselytism in Rabbinic literature has been comprehensively treated in recent years by *Bamberger*, *Proselytism in the Talmudic period*, *Cincinnati* 1939, and *W. Braude*, *Jewish Proselytising in the first five centuries of the common Era*, *Providence* 1940. Both scholars arrive at similar conclusions regarding the generally favourable attitude of the Rabbis towards Proselytes. Cp. also *Moore*, *Judaism* 1, 322. Hebrew studies on the subject: *Hershberg* in *Hatekufa* 12 and 13; *I. Levi* in *Hagoren* 1922; *Rabbi Benjamin*, *Hashearim Niftachim*, 1942. References for the general Reader: *Montefiore-Loewe*, *Rabbinic Anthology* p. 566f.

52) *R. Helbo*, an Amora of the fourth century, is quoted with the following saying: Proselytes are like a leprous sore (*Sapachat*) to Israel, as it is said (*Isaiah* 14, 1): And the stranger shall join himself with them and they shall cleave (*Venispechu*) to the house of Jacob. *Kiddushin* 70b and parallels.

It is interesting to note that in *Tosafot* ad loc. *Abraham the Convert* interprets this passage as being favourable to converts: Converts are thoroughly familiar with the Commandments and observe them very strictly; they thus cause God to judge severely those born Jews who are less zealous in the observance of the *Mitzvoth*. Another pro-convert interpretation *ib*: God commanded the Israelites not to hurt proselytes; as this commandment is sometimes violated, therefore the acceptance of proselytes is hard on the Israelites. The verse in *Isaiah* adduced by *Rabbi Helbo* is interpreted in a manner friendly to converts by *Rabbi Berechyah*, *Helbo's* pupil: the word *Venispechu* indicates priesthood, according to *1 Samuel* 2, 36, and implies that the descendants of proselytes will attain the dignity of priests.

Exodus Rabba 19, 4. As Berechyah was a pupil of Rabbi Helbo, in whose name he records many traditions—Bacher, *Agadat Amora'ei Eretz Israel* 10, 163—it is possible that Rabbi Helbo's statement also bears an interpretation favourable to proselytes, Cp. Guttman p. 87.

53) Gen. R. 46, 10: Josephus *Antiq.* 20, 2—4.

54) *Kohleth R.* 5, 11.

55) *Yer. Megilla* 72b; *Aboda Zara* 10b; 20a; *Yelamdenu* in *Yellinek Beth-Hamidrash VI* 85; *Nedarim* 50b and *Rashi ad loc.*

56) *Midrash Tehillim ad Ps.* 110, 1.

57) *Nedarim* 32a.

58) *Sanhedrin* 99b.

59) *Sukka* 52b; Cp. Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity* 2, 40. On *Malki Zedek* in the *Agada* see Aptowitz, *Monatschrift* 926, 92f.

60) *Ruth* 1, 16: "Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God." It is highly improbable that the story of *Ruth*, the *Moabitess*, who marries an *Israelite*, is intended as a protest against the decrees of *Ezra*. *Ruth* was a sincere proselyte before she married *Boaz*, while the decrees of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* were directed against foreign women of alien faith. What the story does convey, however, is the theory that *Ruth's* alien descent did not detract from her worthiness to become the ancestress of *King David* and the *Messiah*.

61) *Kohleth R.* 8, 1; *Zebachim* 116a; *Megilla* 14b.

62) *Messiah ben Joseph: Sukka* 52b.

63) Cp. *Radin*, *Jews among Greeks and Romans passim.*

64) *Judaism* 1, 324 ff. Cp. *Schuerer*, *Jewish people in the time of Jesus Christ.* III 164.

65) *Yebamoth*, 47a; *Sabbath*, 145b.

66) *Pesachim*, 96a; *Sifre Num.* 71; Cp. *Zeitlin*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1945, p. 309f.

67) *Sanhedrin* 39b; *Num. R.* 8.

68) *Pesikta Rabbati* 40 (ed. *Friedmann* p. 167b.) and parallels.

69) *Kusari* 1, 115.

70) Cp. *Cassel's* note to *Kusari ad loc.*—*Zeitlin* rightly observes (*ib.*): "The (ethnic) philosophy of *Judah Halevi*

on Judaism is traditionally as well as historically wrong. It represented the personal opinion of an individual thinker, and did not influence the Judaism that was being taught by the Rabbis." Judah Halevi's near-racist concept is possibly influenced by Greek race theories. Cp. Guttman Das Judentum und seine Umwelt. p. 87; Heinemann, Der Morgen 1925 and Zion IX (1949) 164f; Wolfson, Jewish Quarterly Review 1942/43 p. 62 f.

71) More Nebuchim 2, 44; Cp. Wolfson ib. pp. 75; Zeitlin ib. p. 311.

72) Cp. Bamberger ib. pp 147.

73) In Athens a naturalised citizen was not allowed to become an archon or to hold priesthood. Wolfson, Philo 2, 360. *INUSA: NOT PRESIDENT. ADDED BY F.F. 1960*

74) Yadaim 4, 4; Berachot 28a and parallels.

75) Tosefta Kiddushin 5, 4; Sifre Deut. 253, Yebamot 76b.

76) Hilchot Issure Biah 12, 25.

77) Responsa ed. Freimann No. 42.

78) Cp. Yerushalmi Bikkurim 1, 4. Maimonides, Hilchot Bikkurim, 4, 3.

79) Kobetz Teshuboth Ha Rambam ed. A. Lichtenberg 2, 23. English translation in Glatzer, Maimonides said p. 56f; Cp. also Rosin, Ethik des Maimonides p. 148.

80) On the teaching that "God demands the Heart," cp. B. Heller, Hebrew Union College Annual IV p. 565 ff. and my study Antikes zur Bibel und Agada in Kaminka Festschrift p. 99.

81) Kush in the Bible generally denotes Ethiopia, but occasionally refers to the North-Arabian provinces, situated opposite Ethiopia, or to the Babylonian province of Kashishu (Cp. Gen. 10, 8) or the Persian province of Kuzistan. Cp. A. Jeremias, Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients. p. 262. A. Epstein in Revue des Etudes Juives, 24, 82f.

Kush means sunburnt, swarthy or black. Similarly the Greek word Ethiopia signifies the land whose inhabitants have sunburned, black faces. Shakespeare superbly expresses the natural relation between the sun and the dark skin of the African: "Mislike me not for my complexion, the shadow'd livery of the burnished sun, to

whom I am a neighbour, and near bred." (Merchant of Venice.)

82) This epitheton refers to the Kushites as well as to the Sabeans mentioned in the verse. The tall stature of the Ethiopians is mentioned by Herodot III, 20, who describes them as the tallest, most handsome and longest-lived of men. Eldad Ha-Dani mentions the tall stature of the Kushim, (ed. Epstein, p. 27). It is uncertain to which black people he refers. Cp. note 102.

83) The apocryphal Sibyl, V 206 (ed. Charles) calls the Ethiopians "stouthearted."

84) Asa, King of Judah, is reported to have warded off a Kushi invasion against this territory. 2 Chron. 14, 8f. This war may have been the only mass contact between Judeans and Ethiopians; but according to some commentators Kushi in this connection may refer to Egyptians or dark-skinned North Arabian tribes. Cp. Curtis in International Critical Commentary.

85) The Romans, naturally enough, reacted in the same way: Cp. p. 43.

86) Gray in International Critical Commentary: "There is no reason why the Hebrews should not have admired the burnished copper colour of the Ethiopians, for even Jeremiah 13, 23 need not be interpreted as though the ancient Hebrews shared the modern white man's objection to colour." (Commentary to Isaiah p. 312).

87) Sabbath 107b.

88) Sukka 53a.

89) Ginzberg Legends IV 299f.

90) According to one textual variant of a Rabbinic dictum ten measures of blackness were sent down to earth, nine of which were received by the Kushim. The other variant reads: ten measures of drunkenness. Kiddushin, 49b.

Abnormally dark-complexioned people were also called Kushim: Mishna Bechorot VII/6. Black wine is called Yayin Kushi, B. Batha 97b; a black Ethrog Ethrog Kushi, Sukka 3, 6. In Ibn Ezra's poem on Chess, the black figures are called Kushim, Cp. Krauss, Jewish studies in Memory of G. A. Kohut p. 383.

91) Moed Katan 16b.

92) Negaim, 2, 1.

93) Pirke R. Eliezer ch. 24.

94) Cp. Cant 1, 5. Black and comely. So the Septuagint version: *Melaina kai kale*. The rendering black but comely—so the Vulgata: *nigra, sed formosa*—is influenced by exegesis.

The Midrash Hagadol, compiled in Yemen in the 13th Century, has the variant: White and handsome (ed. Margulies, Jerusalem 1949 p. 191). This is obviously a correction on the part of the Yemenite compiler, prompted by consideration for the semitic origin of the Arabs and their African slave trade. The Yemenite manuscript of Pirke R. Eliezer also reads: White and handsome.

95) Cp. Cant 5, 11: Black as a raven. David Luria ad loc. remarks that the Negros like the black colour and picture the satan in the image of a white man!

96) An interesting parallel to this Agada is furnished by a folk tale current among American Indians: The Creator was baking three loaves of bread. The first loaf he took from the oven was undertone, pasty and light. This became the white people. Another loaf was burnt; this black and crisp bread became the Negro people. But the third loaf was baked to perfection; this brown and wonderful loaf became the Indians. Quoted in Century Digest, 1947 p. 18.

97) The Jews were perhaps a shade lighter than the Arabs in Arabia. In pre-Islamic literature Jews are sometimes described as having red hair and being of fair complexion. Cp. Lichtenstaedter in Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research, vol. 10, p. 187. This seems also to follow from a Midrash in which Joseph is referred to as a Germani, light-skinned, while the Arabs (Ismaelites) who sell him to Potiphar, are called Kushim, dark-skinned people. Gen. R. 86, 3. The Midrash ib. states that as a rule a Germani sells a Kushi. But a reference to a Germani slave is found in Yer. Yoma 8, 5.

98) The "Medium" quality applies not only to the skin colour of the Semites, but also to the climate of their lands, which is neither hot like the land of Ham, nor cold like the land of Japhet, but moderate, "a blend of cold and heat." Book of Jubilees, 8, 30. Cp. Jehuda Halevy, Kusari 1/95. The excellence of the medium climate and its inhabitants is praised by Maimonides, Pirke Moshe. Cp. Bacher, Bibel-exegese Maimunis, p. 163. S. J. Rapaport, in his biography of R. Chananel, ascribes to the temperature climate of

Palestine the Jewish characteristic of maintaining equilibrium between reason and feeling. Bikkuray Ha- Ittim 1832; Cp. Sloush Renaissance of Hebrew Literature p. 61. The idea already expressed by Aristotle, Politics VII, 7, with reference to the temperate climate of Greece and the character of the Hellenic race: "being intermediate in character, high spirited and also intelligent." Sociological arguments against generalisations about climate and race, Morris Ginsberg Sociology p. 73f. (Home Unieversity Library).

99) This universalist thought is beautifully expressed in the famous hymn to the sun written by Amenophis IV, King of Egypt (7th centry B.C.); Their tongues are diverse in speech, their forms likewise and their skins. For thou Divider has divided the peoples. Breasted, History of Egypt p. 68.

100) Baba Bathra 74b. Cp. L. Rabinowitz, Jewish Merchant Adventurers, p. 56.

101) Kid. 22b. In the fifth century a semi-independent Jewish state appears to have been founded in India which lasted into the 16th century. Baron, History of the Jews 1. 262.

102) Targum translates Kushi with Hindoa (Jeremiah 13, 23) and Kush with Hodu (Isaiah, 11, 11). Rashi renders Hindoa with Kushi: Brachot 36b; Kiddushin 22b; Yoma 82b. Yonathan ben Usiel ad Gen. 10, 1 makes Hindiki descending from Kush. Cp. also Graetz, Geschichte V. 424.

There is a considerable confusion in rabbinic sources as to the geographical identity of Kush and Hodu. The solution seems to lie in the assumption of two provinces called Kush, one south of Egypt, the other in Asia. Already Homer distinguishes between two groups of Ethiopians, one living in the farthest East, the other in the remotest West (Odyssee 1, 23). Herodot (History VII, 70) speaks of the Western Ethiopians, who live near the Egyptians, and Eastern Ethiopians, who were counted with the Indians. These two black-skinned groups are distinguished by their language and their hair. The differentiation between Eastern (Asian) and Western (African) Kushim explains satisfactorily the controversy between Rav and Samuel (Megilla 11a) as to the meaning of the words "Ahasverus ruled from Hodu to Kush" (Esther 1, 1). One teacher declared that

Hodu, India, was situated on one end of the world, and Kush, Ethiopia in Africa, on the other. The other opined that Hodu and Kush were situated one next to the other, referring to the Persian province of Kuzistan. In rabbinic literature Kush generally refers to Ethiopia, while Kushi, like the Greek Aethiops, is a generic term for any dark-skinned man, without regard to exact distinction of origin.

The land Kush, mentioned by the traveller Petachyah of Ratisbon together with Babylon (Eisenstein, *Ozar Massaot* p. 50) is obviously an Asiatic country, possibly the Persian district of Kutah (2. Kings 17), 24). Kush, mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (Eisenstein *ib.* p. 39) is also a country situated in Asia, inhabited by dark-skinned people. Rashi ad Sukka 32b states that Palestine is situated far from Kush, while Babylon is near to that country. So also Rosh *ib.* Neither seems to refer to Ethiopia or to have been aware of the geographical position of that country.

103) The story became notorious through the Austrian anti-semite Rohling who mistranslated the text out of ignorance or to suit his nefarious purpose. In order to support his anti-Talmudic thesis he rendered the Aramaic word *pushkanza*, meaning a raven, with Ein Rabbiner, a Rabbi: consequently it was not a raven who bit off the seamonster's head, but a Rabbi! His ignorance and malice were duly exposed by Franz Delitsch, "Rohling's Talmud Jude" p. 15

104) *Tosafot Yebamot* 101b. On the chronological difficulties of this view, cp. Hyman *Toldoth* 111/1137.

105) Information given by the Rev. M. Lew of Johannesburg. For similar reasons Negroes selected Simon of Cyrene, the "African," who bore the cross of Jesus (Matthew 27, 32) as their patron saint. Cp. Mieses, *Ursprung des Judenhasses* p. 395.

106) Gen. R. 73, 10; Num. R. 9. 33; Gaster, *Maasebook* 11, 648.

107) Gaster, *Maasebook* 1 240. Cp. Menorat Ha-Maor ed. Enelow IV, 103. The *Maasebook*, a collection of tales and legends from the Judeo-German, adds: When the king (the father) heard this explanation, he recognised the truth in the advice of his counsellors and loved the queen and the black child also. The prototype of this superstition is found in Jacob's handling of Laban's flock. Gen. ch. 30. More

sources in Trachtenberg, Jewish magic, p. 303. A Greek parallel from Dioscorides in Sachs, Beitrage zur Sprach und Altertums-forschung p. 49.

108) Responsum quoted in Pachad Yizchak s.v. Kushi. Cp. Berachot 58b: "He who sees an abnormally dark complexioned or red-spotted, or white-spotted person should bless God who created various types of creatures. Krauss, Archaeologie 1/245 believes without supporting evidence that this benediction applies not to a dark complexioned person, but to a black child issuing from white parents.

109) Targum Onkelos ad Num. 12, 1 renders Kushit with Shapirta, beautiful. So also the Samaritan version and Saadya's translation. Cp. Sifre Num. 99. Rashi Sukka 53a states: Elichoref and Achiyah (1 Kings 4, 3) were called Kushites because they were beautiful. The numerical value of Kushit is identical with that of Yefat Mare, beautiful. Tanchuma Zav 13. The proverbial beauty of the Kushi mentioned by Herodot. See note 82. But frequently Kushi is merely a euphemistic appellation for beautiful. See note 125.

110) Dark complexioned children considered un-attractive. Berachot 31b.

111) Sanhedrin 108b. Ginzberg Legends 5, 188. Arab parallels: Gruenbaum, Neue Beitrage zur Semitischen Sagenkunde p. 86.

112) Cp. Aptowitzer, Hebrew Union College Annual 1/241.

113) Tanch. Noah 13.

114) Cp. Ginzberg, Legends V/246.

115) Pesikta Ch. 3. Cp. Aptowitzer ib. 258. 299.

116) Cant. R. ad 1/15; Exodus R. 23, 10.

117) Taanit 7b.

118) Cp. The story of R. Eliezer and the Ugly Man, Taanit 20b. Maharsha ad loc. assumes, without evidence, that the ugly man was a Kushi.

119) Yalkut Prov. ad loc. On aesthetics in Judaism cp. O. Wolfsberg's essay in Bizaron 15 p. 168.

120) Cant. R. ad 1, 5. In Eastern Jewish parlance a Jew with moral or intellectual accomplishments is called a "sheiner Yid," "skeinkeit" denoting spiritual beauty.

121) Josephus, Artapan, Ezechiel the dramatist; Targum Jonathan ad Num. 12, 1. Dibray Hayamim shel Moshe; Sepher Hayashar; Rashban ad loc. Cp. sources in detail in my study Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus, p. 116; Ginzberg Legends V 410; A. Shalit; Introduction to Hebrew Translation of Josephus, p. 71;

122) Sifre ad loc. and parallels.

123) So Ibn Ezra ad loc: "Because of the heat of the sun the Midianites have no whiteness in their skin. Zippora was black and had the appearance of a negress." This explanation adopted by Abarbanel.

124) Sifre Num. 99. Yerushalmi ad Num. 12, 1. Moed Katan 16b. According to those commentators who identify the Kushite woman with Zippora, Miriam's and Aaron's complaint was that Moses had abandoned marital relations with his wife. Some modern critical commentators also believe that the Kushite woman is identical with the Midianite Zippora; they identify Kush with Kushan and Kushan with Midyan with reference to Habakuk 3, 7. Cp. Gressman, Mose und seine Zeit p. 271f. The identification of Kush with the Arabian Midianites already in Augustine's Quaestiones in Numeros. According to the Greek and Syrian versions the Kushit was an Ethiopian, a negress.

125) Tanch. Zav 13. Rashi ad Num. 12, 1: People call a handsome child Kushi to prevent the evil eye from harming him. Ibn Ezra ib.: The Arabs call pitch a "white thing," just as in Hebrew a blind man is called "full of light." Sepher Segulot advises people to call their children Kushi to counteract the evil eye. J. Bergmann in the Vienna Seminary Memorial Volume, p. 92. Cp. the Hebrew proper name Kushi in Zephania 1, 1 and Jeremiah 36, 14, the Roman name Nero and the Slavonic Czarny (black).

126) Cp. Ex. 34, 16. Num. 31, 16. Joshua 23, 12, Judges 3, 6. 1 Kings 11. These sources reflect the essential connection between the aversion to intermarriage and the idolatrous immorality of the heathen nations.

127) Cant. R. 16.

128) The reasons why Maimonides specially mentions the Kushi as eligible for marriage may be twofold: either to refute an isolated Agada according to which the Hamites are excluded from intermarriage on account of the Biblical

curse (cp. Yalkut 1/168) or because the problem of black-white relations had some practical importance in a country like Egypt with a considerable black-skinned population of Sudanese and Ethiopians. Though all editions at my disposal have the reading Kushi, it is not impossible that Kushi was, for reasons of censorship, substituted for Kuthi (Samaritan); an example for such a substitution in Baba Kama 113a quoted in Aruch complete s.v. Kushi. Our editions ib. read Kenaani. In Yebamoth 68a, Kuthi is mentioned with Amoni, Moabi and Edomi. However, I believe that Maimonides deliberately mentions Kushi to include every species of humanity as eligible for conversion and intermarriage. This is perfectly consistent with his humanitarian Weltanschauung.

129) Cp. H. Ribalow Contemporary Jewish Record, June 1944: Black and White Jews pray together, but they do not intermarry as that would be mixing strains. See also Ausubel, Treasury of Jewish Folklore p. 541. Cl. Buchanan, an English traveller, (about 1800) in his description of the Jewish community of Cochin, relates that there is a barrier between white and black Jews and that the white Jews look upon the black Jews as an "inferior race and as not of pure caste." A. Cohen, Anglo-Jewish Scrap Book p. 65. One cannot help thinking of the well-known adage "Wie es christelt sich, so juedelt es sich," a fact already noted in the medieval Sepher Chassidim. Par. 901.

It has, however, to be borne in mind that the division between black and white Jews in Cochin is fundamentally social. The black Jews are mainly illiterate and engaged in petty trading and manual work while the white Jews play a prominent part in Cochin's business life. Cp. London Jewish Chronicle, 21st October, 1949. In Israel, where there is no social cleavage between white and coloured Jews, colour feeling is hardly noticeable.

130) Ben Azzay and R. Akiba in Sifra Kedoshim IV. Cp. also Lauterbach Ethics of the Halacha p. 16.—The concept of the unity of man flows out of the unity of God, while polytheism postulates racial division. Already Xenophanes (6th century B.C.) complains that the Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed, while the Thracians say they have red hair and blue eyes. (Russell, History of Western Philosophy p. 59).

131) Cp. Hofmeyer, Hoernle Memorial Lecture 1945 p. 19.

132) 1 John, 4, 8; Tanch. Vayera 1.

133) Tana d' be Eliyahu ch. 7, ed. Friedmann p. 36.

134) An Ethiopian converted by Philipp, Acts 8, 38.

135) Colour prejudice among the Arabs in the pre-Islamic era: Antar, the famous Arab warrior-poet (6th century), hero of popular Arab romantic literature, was the son of a Kushite woman. In one of his poems he complains that his enemies scorn him because his skin is black: but the purity of his virtues, he hopes, will add brightness to his personality. Yehuda, Ever ve Arav p. 178. This prejudice was affected by the acceptance of the universalist Islamic creed: According to Mohammedan tradition, the pious Abyd-el-Ushid ibn Zeid receives a Negress as his companion in Paradise. A recurring figure of Mohammedan legends is the "Negro, beloved of God." Heller, Hebrew Union College Annual, IV, 391.

During the first World War in France some Indian Moslem soldiers created a disturbance finding black troops from Senegal who served in the same barracks as themselves. They were about to proceed from protest to violence, when someone pointed out that these blacks were Moslems. Instantly the protest was silenced and an apology offered. (Royden, Religions, April 1944). "The ideal of a league of human races has indeed been approached by Islam more nearly than by any other faith; for the league of nations founded on the basis of Mohammed's religion takes the principle of the equality of all human races so seriously as to put other communities to shame" (Prof. S. Hurgonje, Religions, ib.).

"Mohammedanism alone among the religions of the world has remained free from colour bias. It welcomes all converts, whether they be Negroes or pariahs. Without reserve it accords them equal rights and privileges and receives them into its social circle as much as into its religious fold. It is the only religion that excludes all barriers of birth and colour, and admits its converts into the community on the basis of complete social equality" (Dr. Dhall, ib.).

136) Midrash Fragment in Ginze Schechter 1, 86.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES TO KUSHIM.

The Rabbis, endeavouring to prove that there is "some soul of goodness in things evil," interpret the Biblical verse "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26, 9) as referring to certain benefits which the Egyptians derived from the ten plagues that God had inflicted upon them. A prolonged frontier dispute between Kush (Ethiopia) and Egypt had been the cause of enmity between these two countries. The plagues of the frogs and the locusts helped to settle the argument in a peaceful manner. The land where the frogs and locusts held sway, was considered as Egyptian territory; the line at which they stopped, was recognised as the border of Ethiopia. Thus God's judgments over Egypt were the cause of a righteous peace between two nations (Exodus R. 10, 2; 13, 14).

"Nobles shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God" (Psalm 62, 32). God, explain the Rabbis, will instruct the Messiah to accept offerings even from the Egyptians, who had cruelly enslaved the people of Israel, because Egypt had been a dwelling place for the Israelites; how much more favourably will the Messiah receive the homage of the Ethiopians (Kushim), who had never inflicted any harm on the people of Israel! (Pessachim 118b).

GLOSSARY.

Mishna: Code of Rabbinic laws, compiled by Rabbi Jehuda Hanassi (200 c.e.).

Tosifta: "Supplement"; companion volume to the Mishna.

Midrash: Rabbinic exposition of Scripture.

Halacha: Rabbinic Law.

Agada (Haggada): Non-legal part of Rabbinic Literature, legends and narratives of a didactic and edifying character.

Kushi: Ethiopian, Negro.